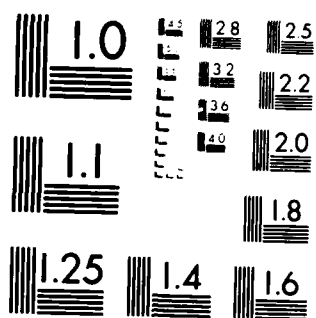


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United States Army
Recruiting Command

USAREC SR 82-5 AD_____

AN ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. ARMY TRAINEE DISCHARGE PROGRAM

BY

F. DAVID COLEMAN

December 1982

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Research, Studies and Evaluation Division
Program Analysis and Evaluation Directorate
Fort Sheridan, Illinois 60037

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE U. S. ARMY
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F. DAVID COLEMAN

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USAREC STUDY REPORT 82-5

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DISCLAIMER

The views, opinions, and findings in this report are those of the author and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other authorized documents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This analysis of the Army Trainee Discharge Program (TDP) was directed by the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, who has expressed concern over higher levels of early attrition. The report includes a review of the TDP and the literature on attrition, an analysis of existing Army data, and discussions of the projection methodology of ELIM-COMPLIP, qualitative issues which impact on loss rates, and TDP policy and administration. The program, which is governed by Army Regulation 635-200, has been found to be sound. Higher attrition rates are attributed to increased emphasis on TDP at the training centers due to recent Army-wide force competency initiatives. The impact on personnel who are eligible for the Army College Fund has been minimal even though greater numbers of losses are occurring from upper mental category cohorts. The currently used measures; educational achievement, AFQT score, and gender were found to be valid and useful predictors of TDP attrition. Additional measures that can be used to improve prediction methodology are race, reading grade level, and age. The report includes specific recommendations to improve prediction and management of TDP attrition.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Subsequent to the advent of the All-Volunteer Force, the rate of first term enlisted attrition showed marked increases (US General Accounting Office 1980). This was true in all branches of military service, and became the subject of concern at high levels of management. The discharge of recruits who were substandard performers and had motivational problems was facilitated by military policy. The Army's formal program for this, the Trainee Discharge Program (TDP), was started during fiscal year (FY) 1974.

TDP provides for commanders a means to expeditiously discharge soldiers who lack the necessary motivation, discipline, ability, or aptitude to become productive members of the Army, provided that they have not completed 180 days or more of active duty. From the advent of TDP through the end of FY 82, early discharges of members due to motivation, discipline, ability or aptitude for continued service who had served between seven and thirty-six months were handled by the Expeditious Discharge Program (EDP).

The document which governs TDP (as well as all other types of enlisted separations) is Army Regulation 635-200, dated 1 October 1982. Chapter 11 covers TDP. EDP as a separate program has been eliminated. Most TDP-type discharges for persons past six months of service are being handled under the provisions of chapters 10 and 13.

THE PROBLEM

Over the years, TDP has proven to be a successful means for early elimination of substandard and marginal performers. The Army uses a computer model, the Cohort Targeting System (CTS) model of the Enlisted Loss Inventory Model -- Computation of Manpower Programs Using Linear Programming (ELIM-COMPLIP) to make periodic projections of various types of attrition. The Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel became concerned, however, because the TDP attrition that occurred during the first three quarters of FY 82 was 14 percent higher than the CTS projection. At his direction, a working group was formed to study the problem.

A Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) message (DAPE-MPA), dated 1 October 1982, tasked the US Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) with responsibility for coordinating the research effort and preparing a final report. The following information was provided:

- o Procedures/offical policies for TDP have not been changed.
- o TDP has not received additional command emphasis.
- o The quality of Army recruits has improved.

A thorough review of the TDP was directed. Specific instructions were given to:

- o Review FY82 trainee discharge data and analyze TDP losses by:
 - Training center where they occur.
 - Army College Fund (ACF) eligibility.
 - Demographics.
- o Provide recommendations concerning the accuracy of TDP projections.
- o Present any other findings which may have impacted on higher TDP rates.

SCOPE

In order to adequately address the concerns that exist concerning TDP, this study reviews existing Army data (Part III) and the literature on attrition (Part IV), including research done by other services. It also includes a qualitative analysis of issues which impact on TDP rates (Part V). The ELIM-COMPLIP/CTS projection methodology is discussed in Part VI. TDP policy and administration are reviewed in Part VII. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Part VIII.

II. STUDY OBJECTIVES

Based on HQDA tasking, the following objectives for the study were established:

- o Identify data sources and collect data on TDP losses by training center, Career Management Field (CMF) for ACF eligibles, and demographics, such as Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score category, education, race, and sex.
- o Analyze data to identify quantitative factors which can be used to predict TDP attrition.
- o Conduct a search of literature on early attrition of enlisted soldiers and determine applicability of findings to the Army situation.
- o Conduct interviews with appropriate personnel to identify qualitative factors that impact on TDP attrition rates.
- o Review TDP projection methodology as contained in CTS.
- o Review TDP policy and administration.
- o Provide findings and recommendations.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND SUMMARY

COLLECTION

Quantitative data were gathered from three primary sources:

1. The Enlisted Master File (EMF) that is maintained by the Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) was used for separation statistics by various categories. Two on-demand reports (as of the end of August) were obtained. The first, the FY 82 Separations by Month Report, provides data by category of attrition. Included are TDP, EDP, other adverse, total adverse, medical/physical, ETS, re-enlistment, early release, marriage/pregnancy/parenthood, other attrition, and total attrition. It also shows the accessions for each month. Demographic elements contained in the report are race, education, sex, and AFQT score category. The other report provides data on personnel eligible for the Army College Fund who were TDP losses, by CMF and term of service.

2. Extracts from the DSCPER 374 report (as of 30 Sep 82) were used to gain attrition data on accession cohorts from FY 73 through FY 82 first quarter. Information in this report summarizes first term male attrition up to 36 months. Percentages for each cohort are shown at intervals of 3, 6, 12, 24, and 36 months. Categories described are education level, AFQT category, age, and race.

3. The training centers report on TDP losses to the Training and Doctrine Command Headquarters (TRADOC). Titled the Enlistee Loss Status Report, it is prepared as of the last calendar day of each month. Separate data are prepared for males and females in the categories of Regular Army (RA), US Army Reserve (USAR), and Army National Guard (ARNG). Demographic data include education level, race, and age.

These data, after detailed screening and consolidation, were used to analyze:

- o Trends in TDP attrition that have occurred over the years.
- o The TDP rates at the various training centers.
- o TDP statistics for FY 82.
- o The impact of TDP attrition on the Army College Fund.
- o The demographics of soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of TDP.

All AFQT data used in the analysis have been renormed.

TRENDS

This discussion of the trends that have occurred in the TDP rates since FY 73 focuses on the accession cohorts of male high school diploma graduates (HSDG(M)). During the last 10 years, the category of HSDG (M), as a percentage of total accessions, has fluctuated somewhat (see figure 1).

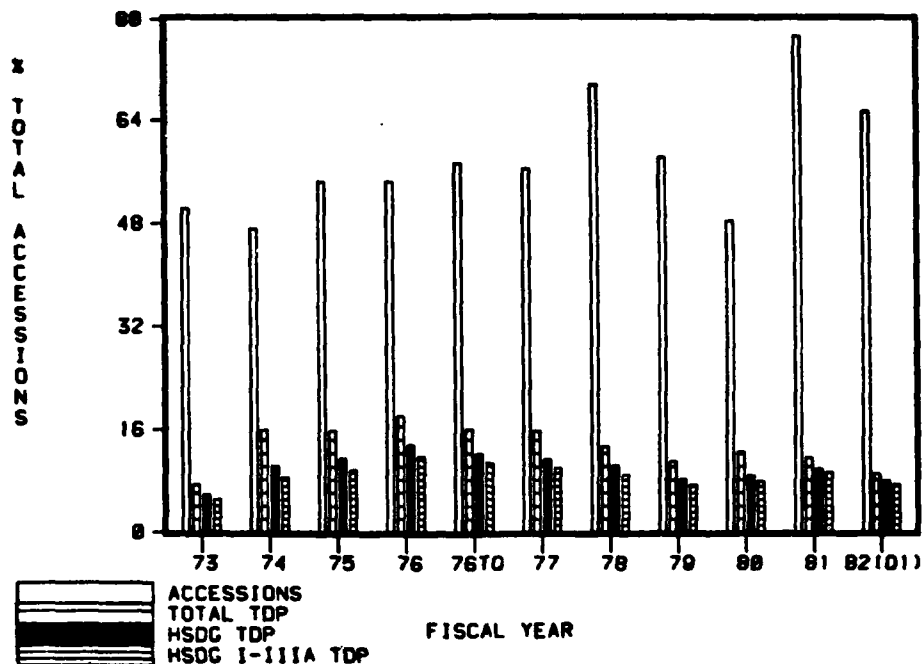


Figure 1. Summary of TDP attrition, HSDG(M) accession cohorts, FY 73 through first quarter FY 82.

SOURCE: DCSPER 374, as of 30 September 82.

In 1973, they represented 50.3 percent of total male accessions. After dropping slightly during 1974, this category remained over 50 percent through FY 77. The FY 78 HSDG(M) accession cohort rose to 69.5 percent of all male accessions, and then dropped back to 48.3 percent in FY 80. During FY 81, it was at an all-time high of 77.3 percent. The total male TDP attrition rose to 15.9 percent in FY 74 when the formal program was first implemented, and then leveled off to 11.1 percent during FY 79.

The increase in HSDG(M) accessions from FY 80 to 81 was nearly 50 percent. During the same period the total male TDP rate went down, from 12.5 percent to 11.7 percent (see figure 2). HSDG(M) TDP went up from 8.9 to 9.9 percent.

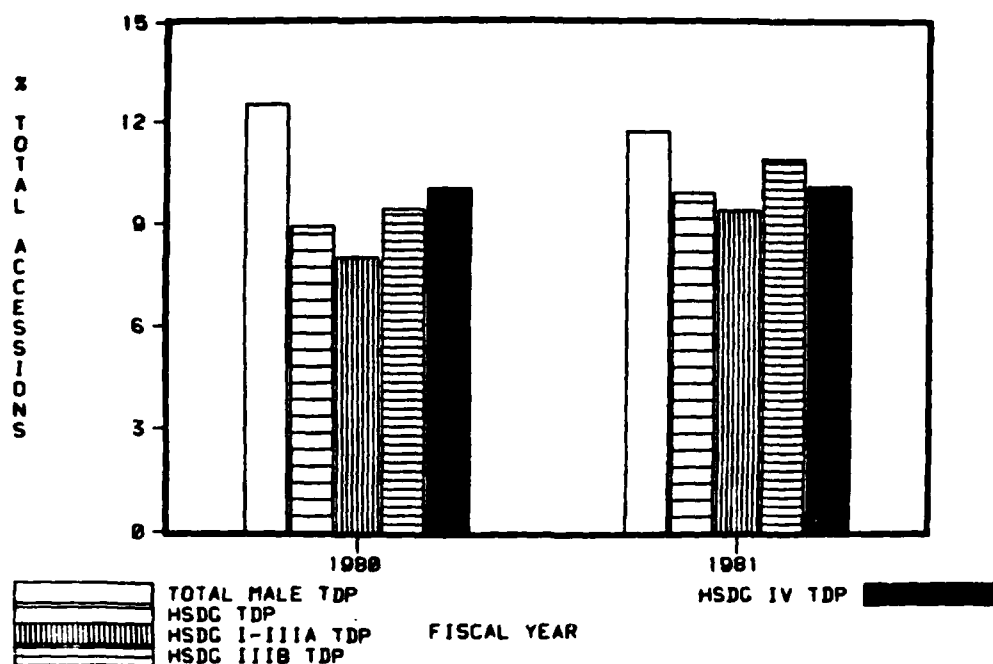


Figure 2. Summary of TDP attrition, HSDG(M) accession cohorts, FY 80 and 81.

SOURCE: DCSPER 374, as of 30 September 82

The highest TDP losses of male cohorts during FY 80 and 81 were among those who were 17 years old (13.9 percent and 13.3 percent), and those who were 22 (13.6 percent and 13.8 percent), and in the 23 and over age group (15.9 percent and 15.6 percent). The male TDP attrition rates by age and race for FY 80 and 81 are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Male TDP attrition rates by age and race, FY 80 and 81 accession cohorts.

FY	Age							Race		
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23+	White	Black	Other
FY 80	13.9	10.7	11.2	12.4	13.4	13.6	15.9	13.6	9.9	10.2
FY 81	13.3	9.6	10.6	11.8	12.3	13.8	15.6	13.0	8.3	9.6

SOURCE: DCSPER 374 report, as of 30 September 82.

White males were lost at higher rates over the 2 years (13.6 percent and 13.0 percent) than were blacks (9.9 percent and 8.3 percent) or other minorities (10.2 percent and 9.6 percent).

The quality (AFQT Category I-III A) rate increased from 8.0 to 9.4 percent, indicating that the quality shift that occurred in accessions was accompanied by an increase in quality TDP attrition (see table 2). Male non-high school graduate NHSDG(M) cohorts attrit at higher rates, but the number of HSDG(M) being lost is also increasing.

Table 2. Comparison of HSDG(M) I-IIIA accessions and TDP attrition rates as a percentage of total male accessions, FY 80 and 81.

	<u>Accessions</u>	<u>TDP Attrition</u>
FY 80	20.8%	8.0%
FY 81	32.7%	9.4%

SOURCE: DCSPER 374, as of 30 September 82.

TRAINING CENTER RATES

Although data were collected and analyzed by TRADOC for all Army components (Active Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard) the manpower models only make projections for Active duty personnel strengths. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis only Active Army statistics will be discussed. Figure 3 shows male TDP attrition rates for FY 82 through July, by training center, and figure 4 shows the same for females. There is no training at Fort Benning and Fort Knox for females. The high NHSDG(F) rates at Fort Bliss and Fort Dix are based on only 7 and 82 total accessions, respectively. The total number of NHSDG(F) accessions reported was only 862. Not all of the training centers, unfortunately, report data in a timely manner or accurately. This hinders TRADOC collection, compilation, and reporting of accurate TDP data.

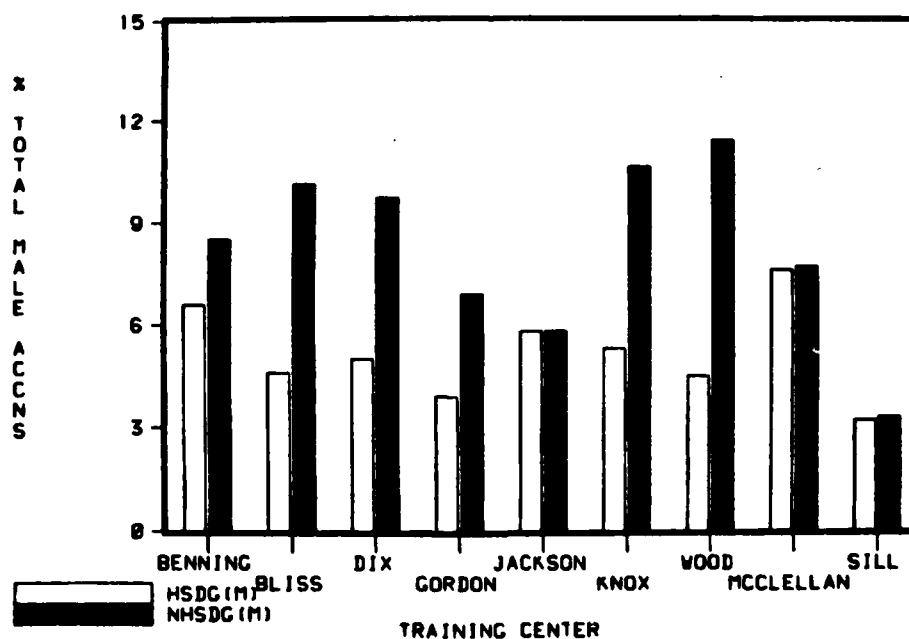


Figure 3. Male TDP attrition rates by installation and education, FY 82 through July.

SOURCE: TRADOC TDP report, as of 15 November 82.

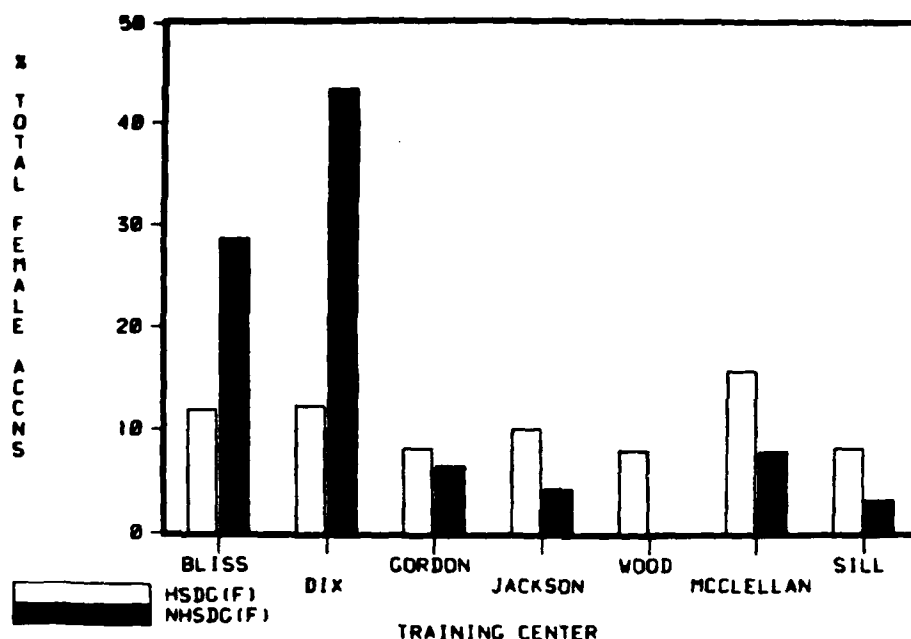


Figure 4. Female TDP attrition rates by installation and education, FY 82 through July.

SOURCE: TRADOC TDP report, as of 15 November 82.

FY 82 TDP STATISTICS

The TDP rate for FY 82 through August, based on total accessions, is 8.7 per-cent. Comparisons between the projected and actual TDP and EDP rates are shown in table 3.

Table 3. TDP/EDP losses, FY 81 and FY 82 (through August).

	FY 81	FY 82	
	Reported (Oct - Aug)	Reported (Oct - Aug)	Programmed* (Oct - Aug)
TDP	9,659	9,559	8,281
EDP	10,289	12,255	8,512

* As programmed in the FY 83 President's budget.

SOURCE: DCSPER-MBM.

The increased EDP losses were probably caused by the following two factors:

- o Effective 1 April 82, soldiers were no longer required to consent to separation under the provisions of Ch 5, AR 635-200 (EDP). This made it easier for commanders to process these discharges at their own discretion.

- o With knowledge that the EDP program was to be eliminated with the publication of the new regulation on 1 October 82, commanders increased the use of the EDP prior to its expiration.

The rise in TDP can be attributed to "force competency" initiatives and qualitative factors both of which will be discussed in a later chapter.

ARMY COLLEGE FUND (ACF)

ACF is offered to qualified enlistees based on the following criteria:

- o Non-prior service (NPS).
- o High school diploma graduate (HSDG).
- o AFQT score of 50 or greater (MC I-IIIA).
- o Active Army enlistment only.
- o Basic Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) participation.

Only offered by the Army, ACF offers up to \$15,200 for a two year enlistment, or up to \$20,100 for three or four year enlistments. Certain Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) may also call for a cash bonus of up to \$5000 (or \$8000 in some bonus test areas of the country).

During FY 82, the ACF was offered to personnel enlisting for training in MOS contained in 20 of the Army's 30 Career Management Fields (CMF). The enlistees who qualified for participation in the program, referred to as ACF eligibles, during FY 82 through August accounted for 26.6 percent of total NPS accessions. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of ACF eligibles by term of service.

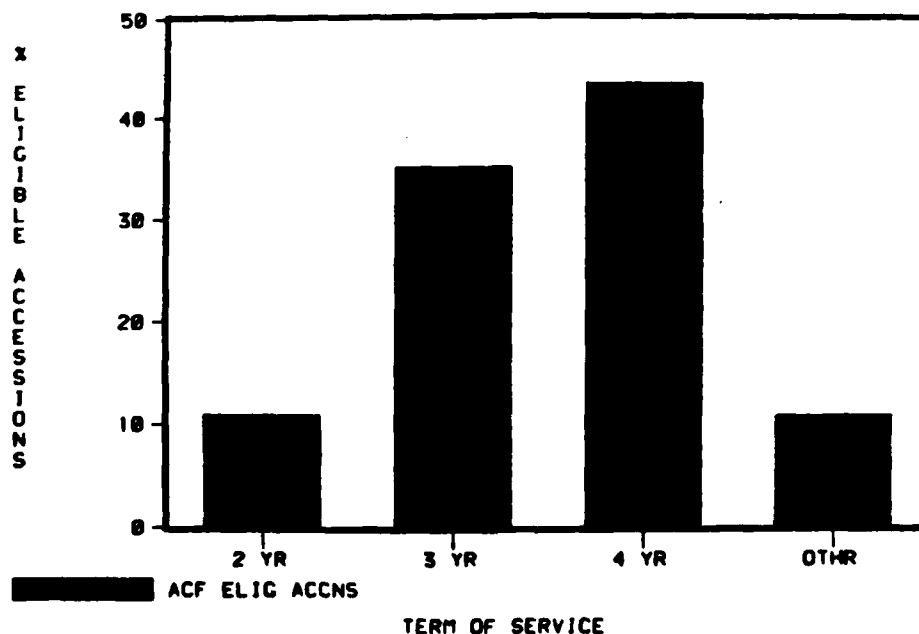


Figure 5. Accessions of ACF eligibles by term of service, FY 82 through August.

SOURCE: Special EMF report, TDP attrition of ACF eligibles, as of 31 August 82.

The TDP attrition rates of ACF eligibles by term of service and CMF, as a percentage of qualified accessions in each CMF, are shown in table 4. The right hand column illustrates the total TDP attrition rates of each CMF. The overall rate of 5.1 percent for ACF eligibles is 3.5 percent lower than the total TDP rate (8.7 percent for FY 82 through August). Consequently, the impact of TDP attrition on the Army College Fund has been minimal.

Table 4. TDP attrition rates by CMF of ACF eligibles.*

CMF	2 Yr	3 Yr	4 Yr	Other	Total
11 Infantry	4.0	4.3	5.2	6.2	5.1
12 Combat Engineering	0	2.7	2.9	6.7	3.0
13 Field Artillery	1	2.2	2.8	1	2.3
16 Air Defense Artillery	2.8	1.4	1.6	3.3	2.0
19 Armor	11.6	4.9	3.3	6.4	4.1
27 Ballistic Land Combat Missiles and Lt Air Defense Weapons Stems Maintenance	0	0	9.3	0	4.7
31 Communications - Electronics Opns	3.1	7.1	4.5	4.4	5.4
54 Chemical	0	12.3	6.6	0	8.2
55 Ammunition	0	6.2	22.2	0	6.5
63 Mechanical Maintenance	2.1	4.9	3.5	2.0	3.2
64 Transportation	3.7	6.1	2.3	5.1	4.9
71 Administration	5.3	5.4	7.2	5.0	5.4
76 Supply and Service	3.2	3.8	6.2	4.0	3.8
81 Topographic Engineering	0	0	0	0	0
84 Public Affairs and Audio Visual	0	4.8	0	0	4.1
91 Medical	7.4	0	4.2	0	4.1
94 Food Service	3.3	12.0	7.1	6.3	9.3
95 Law Enforcement	6.6	10.6	1.7	7.6	9.5
96 Military Intelligence	0	0	0	0	0
98 Electronic Warfare/Cryptological Opns	4.3	3.1	4.5	14.2	4.5
Total	3.8	6.9	4.1	4.8	5.1

* As percentage of total HSDG MC I-IIIA accessions in CMF.

SOURCE: Special EMF report, TDP attrition of ACF eligibles,
as of 31 August 82.

FY 82 TDP AND ACCESSION DEMOGRAPHICS

Comparison of the demographics of TDP losses and accessions during FY 82 allows for analysis of the representativeness of losses based on those who join the Army. Ideally a cohort analysis would be in order here, but the recent end of the FY and time lags that exist in the availability of data preclude it.

For FY 82 through August, 77.6 percent of the personnel who were discharged under TDP and 64.2 percent of the people who enlisted were white, and 19 percent of losses and 31.9 percent of accessions black. Other minority groups accounted for 3.4 percent of losses and 3.9 percent of accessions. Males represented 76.1 percent of TDP losses and 85.8 percent of accessions and females 23.9 percent of the losses and 14.2 percent of accessions. NHSDG represent 18.7 percent of TDP losses and 32.4 percent of accessions and HSDG 81.3 percent of the attrition and 67.6 percent of those who joined. The breakout by education and AFQT score category is shown in table 5.

Table 5. Education level and AFQT category of TDP discharges as compared with accessions, FY 82 through August.

Education	AFQT Category			
	I-III A		IIIB-IV	
	TDP	Accns	TDP	Accns
NHSDG	11.6%	9.2%	7.1%	23.2%
HSDG	34.8%	26.6%	46.5%	41.0%
Total	46.4%	35.8%	53.6%	64.2%

SOURCE: FY 82 separations by month report from EMF, as of 31 August 82.

SUMMARY

The recent quality shifts in accessions have been accompanied by an increase in TDP attrition of soldiers scoring in category I-III A on the AFQT. The cohort analysis of male accessions during FY 80 and 81 illustrates this, as well as the fact that 17-year-old and over 22-year-old soldiers are higher risks for TDP attrition. Also the attrition rates for whites are well above those of minorities. Attrition by training centers indicates variances which can occur in rates due to local interpretation and implementation of the program. It is evident that timely and accurate reporting of these data must be enforced to provide needed information for HQDA policy review and changes. The presented data indicate that TDP attrition has not hurt the ACF. By comparing the demographics of TDP losses with those of accessions, it can be noted that greater percentages of whites, females, HSDG, and AFQT I-III A, in relation to the rates of accessions in the same categories, were discharged under TDP. Finally, it is evident that policy changes affect TDP rates.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE SEARCH

A thorough review was conducted of documents contained in the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), the USAREC Research Library, and other sources. Early military attrition has been a topic of increasing interest since the beginning of the All-Volunteer Force. There have been more than 50 related studies/reports published in the last 10 years. This type of research first focused on background factors and their use in predicting attrition. Implicit in this research has been the underlying assumption that people who have particular characteristics will be less able to cope with a military environment and/or less willing to invest the effort to cope with organizational life in the military. Recently, there has been a shift in research emphasis to the study of situational and organizational factors which affect attrition.

CONFERENCES

The office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has sponsored two DoD-wide conferences on first term enlisted attrition (Sinaiko 1977, 1981). The first one was held in April 1977. It had the following objectives:

- o To review the magnitude of the attrition problem.
- o To learn about research, both within and outside of DoD, that deals with attrition.
- o To identify promising areas for new research.

Since that conference, and partly because of it, the services have increased their involvement in attrition-related research. A subsequent meeting was held 31 August - 2 September 1981 for the purpose of:

- o Bringing researchers up to date on methodological problems, unpublished data, and future work plans.
- o Identifying gaps and duplicative efforts in research coverage.

Highlights from that meeting included the discussion of interactions between recruit characteristics and the leadership styles of recruit training instructors, as well as an attack on the traditional wisdom that uses high school graduation as the sole criteria for predicting attrition risk. It has been found that under drill instructors with past histories of high recruit training attrition, NHSDG personnel have very high attrition rates. In units with records of low recruit attrition, however, NHSDG personnel have much lower attrition rates. Army experience has shown that NHSDG soldiers as a group were often far from homogeneous in their attrition behavior.

TDP STUDIES

There have been several recent studies which dealt specifically with TDP-type attrition. Two were conducted by the Army to evaluate aspects of physical work capacity, background, psychological coping strategies, and task performance, to determine the relationship of these to attrition and retention of personnel during a stressful training program (Kowal et al. 1979, 1982). One by the Navy (Landau et al. 1980) sought to determine how the attitudes and perceptions of first-term enlistees changed during recruit training, with respect to their commitment to the Navy and future expectations. A Marine Corps report (Mobley et al. 1978) summarized individual and organizational correlates of attrition among first-term enlisted personnel.

Kowal's studies attempted to develop a selection instrument for utilization, as part of a pre-training screening device, to optimize both personnel selection and subsequent occupational assignment and training. A multivariate discriminant model was developed. The results suggested that it would be a cost-effective tool for the identification of dropouts (especially females) and the prediction of task performance in a stressful training environment.

The analysis of Navy first-term sailors' attitudes and perceptions by Landau yielded results suggesting that increased awareness of what to expect in training holds down rates of early attrition. Mobley's study to analyze training attrition of Marine Corps recruits found that graduates of training courses, as compared to those who attrited:

- o Had significantly higher mental scores and were significantly less likely to be married.
- o Had a significantly higher intention and expectancy to complete their enlistment, and a significantly lower expectancy of finding an acceptable civilian job.
- o Had more positive role and organizational feelings, e.g., perceiving the Marine Corps as an attractive service, having expectations of a structured leadership style, looking forward to being a member of a productive team, etc.

Two earlier Army studies (Erwin and Herring 1977, and Bauer et al. 1975) were focused on assessing the feasibility of using autobiographical data and questionnaire responses for early identification of those who would not successfully complete their first 180 days in service, and determination of the factors related to TDP discharges. Erwin and Herring found that those who were discharged under TDP answered many questions in a pattern significantly different from enlistees who completed 180 days. The recommendation was made that the results be subjected to further verification. Bauer identified several factors which were related to TDP attrition:

- o Experience prior to entry in service.
- o Education.
- o School relations.
- o Unemployment.

- o Number of supervisory responsibilities.
- o Job satisfaction.
- o Interpersonal relations in work environment.
- o Sense of personal competence.
- o Reason for enlisting.
- o Financial situation and related problems.
- o Family attitudes about enlisting.

ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES

As previously mentioned, the recent attrition research has focused on organizational factors. Studies concerned with this (Goodstadt and Yedlin 1979, Goodstadt and Romanczuk 1980, and Lockman 1982) emphasize the importance and influence of military organizations, their policy and leadership styles, and how these can affect attrition.

Goodstadt and Yedlin found that in addition to the causes of attrition residing within the individual, causal factors can be found in the nature of the organization and its policies and practices. In their report on unit-level attrition decision making, Goodstadt and Romanczuk found among other things that:

- o Little emphasis has been placed on managing attrition at the unit level.
- o Installations differ greatly in the effort to which they provide attrition management guidance to unit commanders.
- o Commanders' own policies for managing discharges are influenced by their supervisors' guidance.
- o The various problems which can cause attrition are addressed in different ways in different units.

Lockman's study provided alternative approaches to attrition management which could be applied across the services. This work draws from Navy experience. The Navy, incidentally, has probably invested more resources into manpower research than any other service. Lockman's conclusion was that an integrated management framework that includes recruiting, training, assignments, attrition, retention, and compensation must be developed, to allow sound evaluation of alternative manpower policies.

GAO REPORT

In 1980 the General Accounting Office made a report to Congress which highlighted the need for increased management attention of military attrition. Specifically, it recommended:

- o Establishment of more definite separation criteria to insure equitable decisions and avoid making discharges too easy.
- o Development of more uniform data reporting systems.
- o Abolishment of attrition goals or ceilings.

Since this report was published, positive action has been taken by DoD to improve attrition policy and data reporting.

SUMMARY

The literature reviewed in this chapter represents a small part of the numerous studies and publications that exist on the subject. To review, consolidate, and interpret the information contained in these for application to Army programs would be quite useful, but not possible within the time constraints established for this analysis.

V. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

BACKGROUND

Several meetings and interviews were conducted for the purpose of identifying the qualitative factors which affect TDP attrition. Included were an initial session and an in-progress-review (IPR) with the working group, and a fact finding trip to three training centers.

The working group meetings involved discussions on problem definition, data sources and availability, manpower program projection methodology, and of other issues and concerns important to the analysis. It was the general consensus of the working group that consideration must be given to both TDP policy and the philosophy on which the policies are based. The importance of interviewing personnel in training centers who interface directly with TDP related activities was emphasized. Also, three basic qualitative hypotheses for higher TDP rates were proposed:

1. The standards of performance for new soldiers have been raised.
2. Emphasis on TDP as a means of eliminating those who are marginal or substandard performers has been increased.
3. The motivational level of the higher quality soldiers has decreased because of the failure of the training base to meet their expectations.

During the fact finding trip to training centers, interviews were conducted with personnel in the following positions:

- o Battalion Commanders (Lieutenant Colonel/05).
- o Company Commanders (Captain/03).
- o First Sergeants (E8).
- o Senior Drill Sergeants (Sergeant First Class/E7).
- o Brigade/Battalion Adjutants and Legal Specialists.
- o Reception Station Commanders and Executive Officers (05 and 04).
- o USAREC Liaison Representatives (E8 and E7).
- o Medical Personnel (Doctors and Physician's Assistants).
- o Administrative Specialists in Military Personnel Offices (MILPO) who process TDP paperwork and monitor statistics.

These interviews focused on local policy, interpretation of the program, TDP philosophy, and administration. The valuable information gained from the working group meetings and training center interviews indicates that a number of factors that are difficult to quantify must be considered in the analysis of TDP rates.

FINDINGS

Interviewees generally agreed that performance standards in the training centers have been increasing in recent years and TDP is receiving more emphasis. They indicated that, as a result, desertion rates from the training base have

declined. It is not possible to trace this argument to any official policy or regulation, but the generation of this trend is generally attributed to the Army-wide "Force Competency" initiatives that came into effect during FY 82. Unlike the policies on performance standards, clearly defined policies on recruitment and retention have been implemented to improve Army manpower quality. The attitudes toward excellence fostered by these policies have found their way into the training base and are being applied to training performance. TRADOC commanders at all echelons are emphasizing TDP as a means of quality control -- with a better quality soldier being sent to the Army in the field as a product. As one Battalion Commander succinctly put it: "TDP is the cost of doing business." Therefore, contrary to the information presented in the HQDA tasking message, TDP has in fact received additional command emphasis.

It should be pointed out that there is no indication of greater pressure on commanders at any level to achieve specified levels of TDP attrition. One company commander indicated that his unit had 66 soldiers leave service under TDP during two recent training cycles. Another company commander from the same battalion lost less than 20 during the same period. It is reasonable to believe that if a de facto, albeit unofficial, goal or limit had been established, one of those commanders would have been in trouble. This was not the case. In the past years when overall Army strength levels were low, recruiting was difficult, and retention was poor, the training base had to keep as many people as possible to meet end strength requirements. Recent great improvements in recruiting, in both quantity and quality, have given the Army the luxury of being more selective.

The Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP) is used in the training centers as a vehicle for improving the literacy skills of soldiers who experience problems completing training requirements. Commanders interviewed confirmed the findings of a 1980 TRADOC evaluation of BSEP that showed a discharge rate for those who scored below 19 on SelectABLE, the test used to select candidates for the program, of two and a half times greater than the rate for those with higher reading ability. The TDP rate for BSEP eligibles was 10 per 1000, and for all others 4.3 per 1000 (Toomepuu 1981). Likewise, commanders indicated that a relationship exists between the Reading Grade level (RGL) and the percentage of trainees who are discharged. This was shown several years ago through analysis of recruit attrition at the San Diego Naval Training Center (table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between RGL and Navy recruit attrition.

<u>RGL</u>	<u>Percent Discharged</u>
Less than 4.0	64.1
4.0 to 5.9	20.4
6.0 to 7.9	10.3
8.0 to 9.9	7.2
10.0 to 12.0	4.2

SOURCE: Zierdt, Remedial Reading Programs for Personnel Entering the US Navy, Professional Study Report No. 6118, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air War College, April 1976, p.72.

Two of the working group's hypotheses are therefore verified by the interviews. The third hypothesis -- that the training base has failed to meet the expectations of the higher quality enlistee, is obviously harder to prove or disprove. Study on this subject, however, provided some insights into the characteristics of the soldiers who become TDP losses, in terms of their family background, social adjustment, maturity, physical fitness, and motivation.

Standards of performance during initial entry training tend to vary somewhat from one training installation to another. This variance can be attributed to the attitudes of the personnel who actually conduct the training. Though the basic requirements for successful performance are clearly defined, the rigidity to which these are enforced is subject to local policy and personality of trainers. Despite such variances, it was possible to consolidate and generalize the qualitative data gathered from different installations into information that has applicability across the board.

Many young men and women who enlist in the Army today are mentally and physically unprepared for the stresses and rigors to which they will be exposed during their initial entry training. The current crop of young people, the "me generation", has generally less regard for authority or hard work than previous generations of youth. Physical education courses are electives in many high school curricula which some students decline to elect, and therefore grow up lacking the physical stamina needed to meet physical fitness requirements for Army training. Many of them also have a weak drive for self improvement and achievement of success, as a result of lack of discipline in school and at home. This leads to difficulty in coping with the structured and regimented environment of the Army. A general profile of soldiers who become TDP losses indicates that they:

- o Were raised in either a broken home or by overly dominating parents.
- o Are lacking in discipline, maturity, and motivation.
- o Are lacking in physical stamina.
- o Are lacking in literacy skills.
- o Are unable to cope with failure.

This profile should be considered when formulating future policies for TDP.

SUMMARY

The qualitative issues related to TDP attrition show that emphasis has increased for higher standards of performance and the use of TDP as a quality control measure in the training base. A strong relationship exists between trainees' literacy skills and their ability to grasp instruction and successfully complete initial entry training. With the increase of TDP rates desertion rates have dropped. The question of the Army's ability or lack thereof to meet the expectations of new soldiers, however, remains unanswered and needs to be studied. To the extent that a lack of comprehension about the realities of military service and problems of motivation cause TDP attrition, improved techniques in recruiting (e.g., Joint Optical Information Network) which give applicants a better appreciation of the rigors of Army training, could be of great value.

VI. TDP PROJECTION METHODOLOGY

ELIM-COMPLIP

ELIM-COMPLIP constitutes a series of integrated, computer based mathematical models used by the Army to forecast personnel strengths (Midlam 1982). The system is used in the planning, programming, and budgeting process. It allows users to understand the effects of actual or proposed changes to personnel programs, and thereby aids in formulation of personnel policy. Each month new data are incorporated and a series of reports called the Active Army Military Manpower Program is produced. This program shows both the latest actual data and projections, calculated with rates and factors based on the latest data.

The system, by projecting future operating strengths, provides a tool for force structure planning. The projection of accessions permits the Army to plan the size of its training base and recruiting force. The programming function of the system provides the official forecast of Army strength and related information to support the Five Year Defense Program (FYDP).

As part of the decision-making process, ELIM-COMPLIP is run to serve as the basis for assessing the impact of changes in strength or other policies. Strength projections and budget estimates of strength-related costs which are based on ELIM-COMPLIP, provide the base for the Army's request for Congressional authorizations of military manpower.

"What if" type runs are made to assess the impact of policy decisions. Simulation can be done to arrive at feasible alternatives for the manpower posture, given various courses of action under consideration for implementation. The manpower program is updated on a monthly basis to reflect the latest reported personnel strengths. It serves as the basis for determining progress against goals in strength, gains, losses, etc. By showing the implications of future trends based on the latest available data (costs, recruiting deviations, future operating strength projections and accession requirements), ELIM-COMPLIP can be used as a vehicle to identify areas in need of management attention.

Figure 6 provides an illustration of the variability that can occur in Active Army end strengths when ELIM-COMPLIP is programmed using data based on differing program decisions.

Input data for the system are extracted from the EMF, the Gain/Loss Transaction File (GLF), and the force structure allowance, or from targets for the operating strength of the Army.

ELIM-COMPLIP has been criticized as being insensitive to environmental changes (Fagan and Moreno, 1982). As long as these are not too drastic or severe, however, it is capable of making adequate projections.

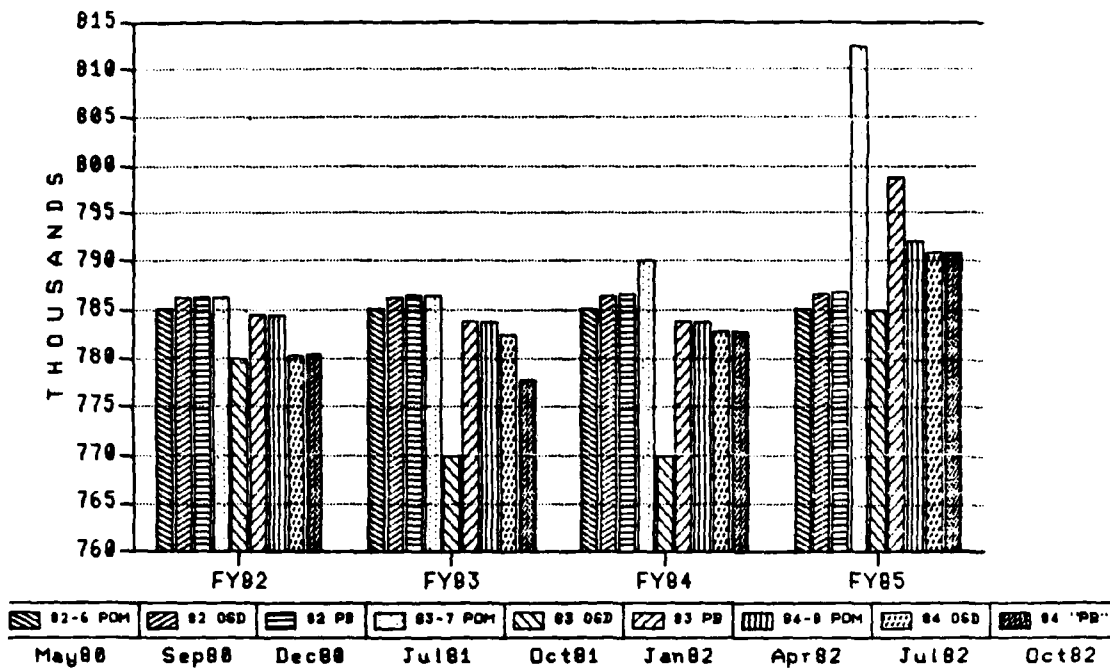


Figure 6. Active Army end strengths based on various major program decisions.

SOURCE: DAPE-MBM.

CONJOINT TARGETING SYSTEM (CTS)

CTS is a part of the Rate/Factor Generator Module of ELIM-COMPLIP (figure 7). This module uses historical time-series data.

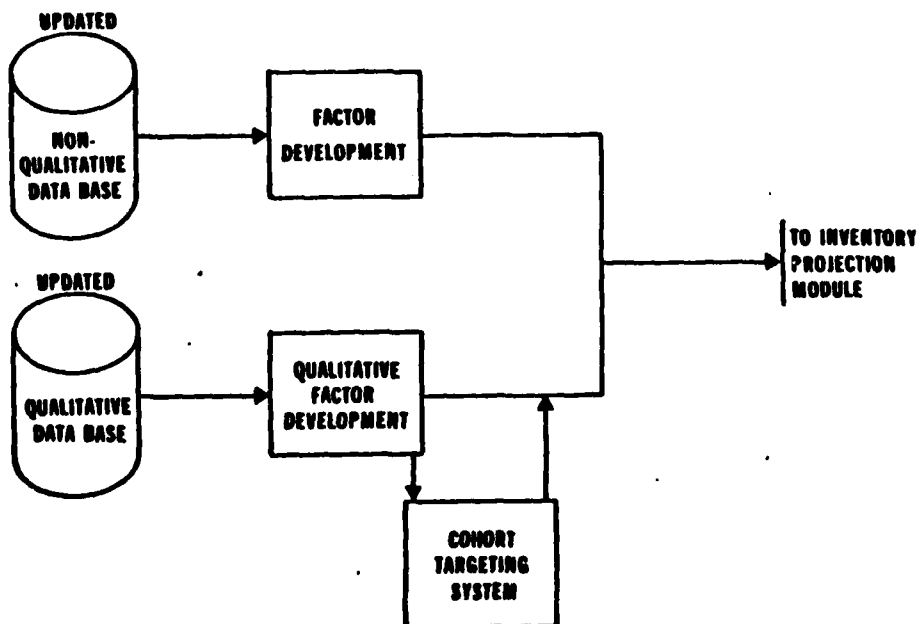


Figure 7. ELIM-COMPLIP rate/factor generator.

To develop loss rates and other factors required by the rest of the system, CTS provides the capability to organize loss data by accession cohort, thereby, permitting computation of cumulative losses for a specific month's accessions. Through separation into characteristic groups as shown in table 7, various categories and combinations of accessions can be studied by term of service.

Table 7. CTS characteristic groups (CG).

<u>Term of service (yrs)</u>	<u>CG</u>	<u>Title</u>
2	1	All enlistees
3, 4	1	Males, HSDG, MC I-III A
3, 4	2	Males, HSDG, MC IIIB
3, 4	3	Males, HSDG, MC IV-V
3, 4	4	Males, NHSDG, MC I-III A
3, 4	5	Males, NHSDG, MC IIIB-V
3, 4	6	Females, HSDG, MC I-III A
3, 4	7	Females, HSDG, MC IIIB-V
3, 4	8	Females, NHSDG, MC III-V
5	1	All enlistees
6	1	All enlistees

Specifications can be made for various aggregations of the characteristic groups, loss categories, and cohorts. Monthly cohorts can be combined to form larger ones (e.g. quarter, calendar year, fiscal year), and projections can be made for various types of attrition.

To use CTS, the user initially requests specific data (historical, projected, or combination) which is displayed at a terminal or on a printed chart. The projections that have been made for TDP attrition of non-prior service males through FY 88 are illustrated in figure 8.

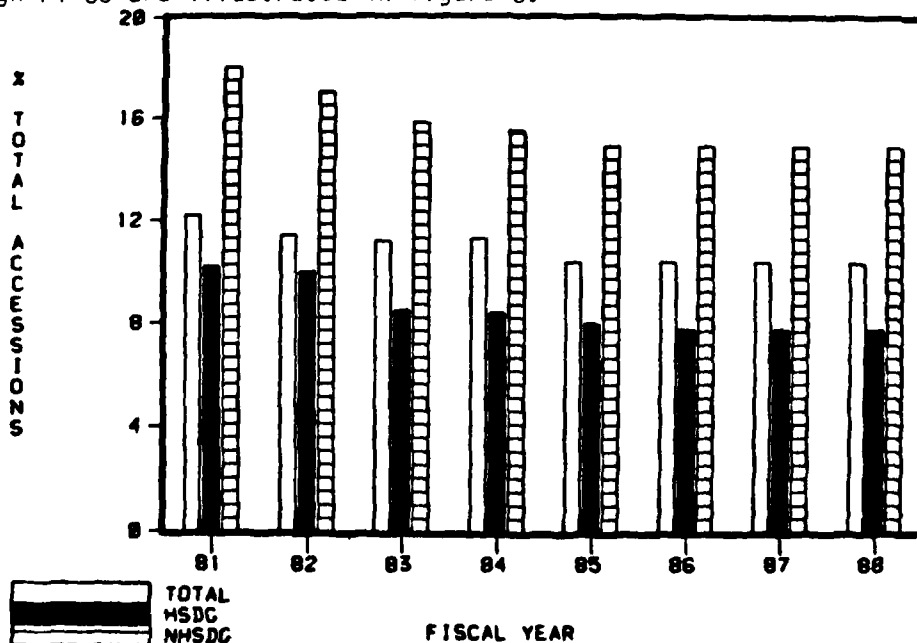


Figure 8. CTS TDP attrition projections for non-prior service males, FY 81 through FY 88.

DISCUSSION

The CTS methodology is utilized in determining the effects of attrition on manpower projections over time. April 1981 estimates reduced first term projected attrition through FY 87, on the basis of the recomputation/renorming of ASVAB scores and the implementation of cohesion initiatives. The following assumptions served as the basis for the reductions in attrition estimates:

- o A linear relationship exists between entry test scores and attrition; soldiers with higher scores are less likely to attrit, especially during the first six months of service.
- o AFQT renorming requires soldiers to score higher than previously in order to reach test category group cut-off scores.
- o The development and implementation of unit cohesion initiatives (i.e., cohort units and regimental system) will cause a reduction in first term attrition.

Regression equations were developed using FY 79 (the most current at the time) as the basis for reduced attrition estimates through FY 87. The new loss rates were then forced into the CTS data base over the first six months of service for FY 82-87 for each characteristic group.

The variation between projections and what actually occurred can be attributed to the changes in recent years in recruiting environment which have resulted in fluctuations in recruit quality, and the changes in policies and procedures, especially those relating to "force competency" initiatives.

SUMMARY

Though ELIM-COMPLIP and CTS do an adequate job of making manpower projections, the estimates for MC I-III A male TDP attrition did not reflect increases that have occurred since FY 80. Recent policy changes, as well as changes in the recruiting environment, have highlighted some shortcomings in the system. Changes to the system should be made to preclude errors in TDP projections, as occurred in FY 82.

VII. POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

POLICY

TDP is governed under the provisions of Army Regulation (AR) 635-200, Personnel Separations-Enlisted Personnel, dated 1 October 1982. This regulation covers guidelines and procedures for separation, including approval authority determination and various types of discharges. The following categories of separations are covered:

- o For expiration of service obligation - ETS (Chapter 4).
- o For convenience of the Government (Chap 5).
- o Because of dependency or hardship (Chap 6).
- o Due to defective enlistments and induction (Chap 7).
- o For enlisted women due to pregnancy (Chap 8).
- o For alcohol or other drug abuse (Chap 9).
- o For the good of the service (Chap 10).
- o Entry level performance and conduct - TDP (Chap 11).
- o Retirement for length of service (Chap 12).
- o For unsatisfactory performance (Chap 13).
- o For misconduct (Chap 14).
- o For homosexuality (Chap 15).

As previously mentioned, the Expeditious Discharge Program (EDP), covering separations of greater than six but less than 36 months, has been removed from the new version of the AR. Discharges that would have been previously handled under the provisions of EDP must now be executed using another program in the revised AR 635-200.

Subordinate installations and/or commands are permitted to supplement the AR for the purpose of adapting it to local practice. Some installations and units have supplemented the AR while others have not. The supplements, when used, serve the purpose of clarifying the contents of the AR to facilitate its use by the chain of command and the administrative personnel who process discharges. For example, the Fort Jackson supplement assists interpretation of the AR by providing guidance on how to identify soldiers who are potential TDP losses. Supplements also provide specific steps that must be followed when processing a TDP loss and the time frames that must be met.

In the ever-changing world of personnel management, modification of an AR is often necessary to reflect policy changes or to resolve problems with implementation. For example, the AR stated that for replacement stream personnel at least one recycle (reassignment between training companies) was necessary prior to TDP discharge. Problems were caused at training centers where reassignment between companies was not possible. To alleviate this, action has been taken to modify the requirement by allowing a recycle between training platoons when recycle between companies is not feasible.

Other policies exist which impact directly on early attrition. Included among these are the weight standards for enlistment and retention in the Army. A disparity exists between the two standards. When an individual arrives at the reception station and is overweight, he or she is discharged. It is felt by some of the personnel in the reception stations that if the arrival of personnel were restricted to Monday through Thursday, the problem for many marginally overweight enlistees (who manage to gain two or three pounds during the weekend) would be eliminated. This policy factor is mentioned because of the impact it can have on early attrition. The fact that DoD weight standards for entrance are several pounds lower than Army standards for retention is the subject of a current study.

The issues of pregnancy and discovery of medical problems which existed prior to enlistment (EPTS) are also of concern. Though not directly related to TDP, reception station personnel consider these important. Administratively these problems are handled in a manner similar to TDP discharges, however EPTS can take several weeks or even months to process. Comments were made that a single program for the processing of all early discharges from the training base should be established.

ADMINISTRATION

Every effort has been made to facilitate the administrative processing of TDP discharges. Standard forms are provided for most of the processing to unit commanders to ease the paperwork burden. Also, packet cover sheets are used by administrative personnel in military personnel offices to insure quality control of the discharge paperwork.

SUMMARY

Policy implementation and administration of TDP is being handled well. Some of the commanders and administrative personnel who work directly with the program in the training centers expressed dissatisfaction with the new regulation. It was mentioned that the regulation covers the handling of the separations of career-oriented personnel quite well, but contains little guidance on the early discharge program. A comparative review of the old and new versions indicates that some changes could cause confusion. However, once training center cadres become familiar with the changes, the dissatisfaction and problems should be eliminated -- the new AR requires patience and attention to detail in its utilization. HQDA should insure the widest possible dissemination, explanation, and coverage (in newsletters, Army Times, etc.) of changes and updates that are made to AR 635-200.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of TDP yielded several major conclusions:

1. The most frequently used measures, education completed and AFQT category, are good predictors of attrition, but should not stand alone for the purposes of making manpower projections. Other factors, quantitatively less easily measured, are also important causes of TDP attrition, e.g., maturity, motivation, attitude, physical ability, etc. Additional factors, such as reading grade level, age, and race are also strongly related to attrition and can be used for predictions.

2. Greater emphasis has been placed on the use of TDP as a means of discharging marginal and substandard performers. This stems from the "force competency" initiatives of FY 81 and 82. This quality control program results in a greater number of high quality losses but, more important, also in better trained and adjusted soldiers sent to units in the field. TDP is labeled as the "cost of doing business".

3. Outputs from ELIM-COMPLIP and CTS can vary because of the qualitative issues mentioned above and the impact of major program decisions. The 14 percent difference in the FY 82 projected and actual FY 82 TDP rates (a difference of approximately one percentage point when compared to total accessions) can be attributed to this.

4. TDP attrition has had a minimal impact on the Army College Fund. Loss rates for ACF eligibles are far below those for overall accessions.

5. The rise in male quality (HSDG MC I-IIIA) accessions has been accompanied by a higher percentage of total TDP attrition from that group (see table 2). Though NHSDG males attrit at higher rates when compared to total NHSDG male accessions, HSDG males are being lost at higher rates than in the past. Males who are 17 years or over 21 years old are more likely to be discharged under TDP than those from 18 to 21. A rise in TDP has been offset by a fall in the desertion rates. Quality control measures are being applied which get rid of those who are likely to go AWOL if allowed to stay in the Army.

6. The policy change in AR 635-200 that eliminated EDP will cause TDP to go up. Efforts are being made by commanders to identify all marginal and substandard performers before they complete 6 months of active duty. Without the administratively simple EDP to use for soldiers with 7 to 36 months in service, commanders will be forced to process discharges under other, more time consuming and complicated provisions of the regulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. ELIM-COMPLIP and CTS should be improved by incorporating additional factors known to affect attrition into the programs used for making manpower projections.

2. Greater emphasis should be placed on the collection of TDP data by the Training Centers and reporting of the data to TRADOC. Data collection should be expanded to reflect all statistically significant causes of TDP attrition.

3. The planning and budgeting process for Army incentive programs should be expanded to account for the influence of TDP attrition.

4. HQDA should consider further study of the organizational factors which affect attrition, especially the following:

- o Procedures and guidance for the early identification of potential TDP losses should be developed.
- o Consideration should be given to the development of Army-wide remedial programs for rehabilitation of potential TDP losses who have remediable problems with physical fitness or completion of training program requirements.
- o A program should be initiated to measure the extent to which the Army is meeting the expectations of its enlistees. The results could be applied to decrease the TDP attrition caused by unrealistic expectations and lack of motivation.
- o Additional, more specific training programs for Commanders and Drill Sergeants on training, management, motivation, and counseling of new soldiers should be developed.
- o Identification and modification of programs and policies which have counterproductive effects on the initial training of personnel should be made.

5. Pre-enlistment physical screening should be enhanced to better identify those with EPTS conditions or the lack of physical ability to successfully complete training. A physical aptitude test for men and women would be in order. As Binken and Bach (1977) point out, "Physical strength and endurance are required for effective performance in a variety of military jobs; yet physical standards have been neither well defined nor rigorously applied."

6. HQDA should move to establish a program for monitoring research related to attrition, as well as to coordinate Army efforts in this area. This recommendation is based on the fact that an excessive amount of time and effort was required to gather the information needed for this report.

7. An improved program for continued recruiter responsibility is needed in order to emphasize the enlistment of truly quality personnel. Under such a program, a recruiter would not receive credit for a contract until the contracted individual completes initial entry and advanced training. This would front load quality control, since the recruiter's responsibility would go beyond enlistment.

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This analysis of the Army Trainee Discharge Program (TDP) was directed by the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, who has expressed concern over increasing levels of early attrition. The report includes a review of the TDP and literature on attrition, an analysis of existing Army data, and discussions of the projection methodology of ELIM-COMPLIP, qualitative issues which impact on loss rates, and TDP policy and administration. The program, which is governed by Army Regulation 635-200, has been found to be sound. Higher (continued)		

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attrition rates are attributed to increased emphasis on TDP at the training centers due to recent Army-wide "force competency" initiatives. The impact on personnel who are eligible for the Army College Fund has been minimal even though greater numbers of losses are occurring from upper mental category cohorts. The currently used measures; educational achievement, AFQT score, and gender were found to be valid and useful predictors of TDP attrition. Additional measures that can be used to improve prediction methodology are race, reading grade level, and age. The report includes specific recommendations to improve the prediction and management of TDP attrition.

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